

Amendments to the Specification:

On page 1, after the paragraph entitled "CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS" added by Preliminary Amendment filed April 3, 2006, please insert the following headings:

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

On page 1, before the last full paragraph, please insert the following heading:

2. Description of Related Art

On page 2, between the second and third full paragraphs, please insert the following heading:

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

On page 4, after the fifth full paragraph please insert the following heading:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

On page 5, after the fifth full paragraph please insert the following heading:

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

On pages 5-6, please replace the paragraph bridging pages 5 and 6 with the following rewritten paragraph:

~~ticular~~ The power required to build up an electric arc 15, in particular an operating electric arc, between the electrode and a workpiece 16 is supplied from the power element 3 of the power source 2 to the welding torch 10, in particular electrode, via a welding line 17, wherein the workpiece 16 to be welded, which is formed of several parts, is likewise connected with the welding apparatus 1 and, in particular, power source 2 via a further welding line 18, thus enabling a power circuit for a process to build up over the electric arc 15, or plasma jet formed.

On page 7, please replace the second full paragraph with the following rewritten paragraph:

The starting procedure of the welding process according to the invention for igniting the electric arc 15 is, for instance, realized by what is called the lift-arc principle 26a. Thus, when starting the ignition procedure, the welding wire 13 is moved in the direction towards the workpiece 16 while, at the same time, a limitedly increased welding wire current I is applied to prevent an incipient melting of the welding wire 13 on the workpiece 16 at the first-time contact. At the first-time contact, i.e. at a short circuit, the welding current I is, for instance, once again increased to again prevent an incipient melting of the welding wire 13. During the backward movement of the welding wire 13, an electric arc 15 is generated as the former is lifted off the workpiece 16, and the welding wire 13 is moved to a predetermined distance from the workpiece 16 with a reversal of the wire conveying direction being effected once again.

In the Abstract, please replace the Abstract currently on file with the amended Abstract attached hereto on its own separate sheet.